Same-sex marriages will be legal soon in some states, lawyer predicts

Associated Press

DENVER — Gays and lesbians may be able to obtain civil marriage licenses alongside heterosexual couples sooner than many think, said an expert attending the Colorado Bar Association convention.

"Some state is going to go first, most likely Hawaii, in issuing same-sex licenses, and some states will respect and honor it, while others won't, starting waves of litigation," said lawyer Evan Wolfson, who successfully argued the first same-sex challenge before the Hawaii Supreme Court.

At a workshop Thursday, Wolfson said the issue would likely carve the United States into a patchwork in which a couple could get arrested after crossing certain state borders.

That's how it used to work with divorce, he said.

Wolfson said people used to go to Nevada to get divorced, but later learned their divorce was not recognized in their home state.

"But we're going to get to the point where everybody's citizenship and marriage is treated equally," he said.

Wolfson compared the same-sex marriage issue to other once-banned unions, including post-divorce remarriage and interracial marriage.

The California Supreme Court was the first to strike down prohibitions on interracial marriages in 1928.

"It took another 20 years for interracial marriage to get to the U.S. Supreme Court," Wolfson said.

Wolfson said homosexual couples want the legal right to marry because of significant benefits, including tax breaks, spousal insurance coverage, child custody rights — even being counted as family when visiting a hospitalized partner.

Since 1995, Colorado lawmakers twice have killed bills to void same-sex marriages sealed in other states. Although there is not an office anywhere in the U.S. that issues marriage licenses to same-sex couples, 25 states already have passed laws to ban or nullify such unions.

ed a public hearing Thursday

do with a campaign."

Russian company sues Littleton businessman

Associated Press

LITTLETON — A Russian manufacturer has sued a local businessman, accusing him of breaching an agreement to market a spacesuit and space vehicle once used by Russian cosmonauts.

The Russian corporation NPP Zvezda filed the lawsuit in Arapahoe County against David Wilcoxen. He is accused of contracting to market the cosmonauts' 1960s-vintage equipment to museums and collectors in the United States, then failing to make the agreed payment.

Wilcoxen replied that he withheld pay for the space memorabilia after the Russian company breached a long-standing relationship by contacting one of

"Once they think they have figured out how to do business themselves, they try to go around you."

Wilcoxen said he plans to file a federal lawsuit against Zvezda.

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